HIGHLIGHTS

Framework for a Healthy Alberta

- Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer and chronic obstructive lung disease, are the leading causes of death in Alberta, and the greatest drain on our health care resources.
- The most common chronic diseases are linked by a few risk factors—unhealthy diets, lack of exercise, tobacco use and substance abuse as well as other risk-taking behaviours.
- As Albertans live longer, and our population ages, it will be important that people enjoy good health as long as possible.
- The Premier's Advisory Council on Health called on the Government of Alberta to set clear objectives and targets for health for the next ten years and to track progress towards those targets.
- The Framework builds on a foundation of initiatives developed by the Government of Alberta that address health determinants—things that affect our health. These initiatives include the Alberta Child and Youth Initiative, the Low Income Review, the Youth Employment Strategy, the Parent Child Literacy Project, the Aboriginal Policy Framework, the Alberta Diabetes Strategy and the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy.
- This *Framework for a Healthy Alberta* sets outcomes, objectives and targets for government action to promote health and prevent disease and injury to the year 2012.

Alberta
GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA

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Outcome 1: Improve healthy behaviours

OBJECTIVES:	TARGETS TO 2012:
More Albertans are physically active	• Increase the proportion of Albertans who are physically active, from 52% to 62%
More Albertans eat healthy foods	• Increase the proportion of Albertans who eat at least 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day, from 34% to 50% • Increase the proportion of Albertans with a healthy weight (Body Mass Index), from 47% to 55% • (Measures for children to be developed)
More Albertans are tobacco free	• Reduce the proportion of Albertans who smoke, from 28% to 18% • Reduce the proportion of pregnant women who smoke, from 25% to 12%
More Albertans are not abusing alcohol and illegal drugs	• Reduce the proportion of Albertans who regularly drink heavily, from 22.5% to 20% • Reduce the proportion of women who drink during pregnancy, from 4% to 0%
More Albertans take steps to prevent injury	• Increase the proportion of Albertans who use seatbelts, from 69.2% (rural) and 89.3% (urban) to 95% throughout the province • Increase the proportion of children who travel in approved child safety seats that are used properly, from 70% to 95% • Reduce the mortality rate due to motor vehicle collisions, from 10.7 to 5 per 100,000 people • Reduce the mortality rate due to suicide, from 15.2 to 12.3 per 100,000 people • Reduce the rate of people hospitalized due to falls, from 366.8 to 300 per 100,000 people • Reduce lost time claims, from 3.4 to 2.0 per 100 person-years worked
More Albertans enjoy good mental health	• Reduce the proportion of Albertans at risk of depression, from 9.2% to 6% • Reduce the proportion of Albertans reporting "quite a lot" of stress, from 26% to 20%
More Albertans are immunized against vaccine preventable diseases	• Eliminate measles by 2005 • Reduce the rate of children under age 2 with invasive pneumoccocal disease, from 8.8 per 100,000 in 2001 to less than 2.9 per 100,000 in 2005 • Reduce the rate of children under age 2 diagnosed with invasive meningococcal disease, from 9.3 per 100,000 in 2001 to less than 2.9 per 100,000 in 2005 • Experience no increase in the number of children under age 5 diagnosed with Haemophilus Influenza type b (Hib) • Increase the proportion of Alberta seniors who get a flu vaccine, from 67.6% to 75%

Outcome 2: Reduce chronic disease

OBJECTIVES:	TARGETS TO 2012:
Reduce heart disease	Decrease the mortality rate from heart disease, from 175 to 140 per 100,000 people
Reduce cancer	Increase the proportion of women aged 50 to 69 who are screened for breast cancer, from 71% to 80% Reduce the mortality rate for breast cancer, from 24.2 to 22 per 100,000 women Increase the proportion of women aged 18 to 69 who are screened for cervical cancer, from 75.1% to 95% Reduce the mortality rate for cervical cancer, from 2.9 to 1.5 per 100,000 women Reduce the rate of people who get lung cancer, from 56 to 48 per 100,000 people Reduce the mortality rate from prostate cancer (currently 24.4 per 100,000 men)
Reduce chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)	Reduce the mortality rate for COPD, from 29.6 to 20 per 100,000 people
Reduce type 2 diabetes	Reduce the rate of new cases of type 2 diabetes, from 4.5 to 4.1 per 1000 people at risk in the general population and from 9.0 to 8.5 per 1000 people at risk within the First Nations population

Examples of Key Government Actions:

- Promote healthy eating, healthy weight, physical activity and tobacco reduction.
- Promote active living, healthy eating and immunization through the provincial Healthy U information and education campaign, the Alberta Diabetes Strategy, health, physical education and life skills programs in schools and other initiatives.
- Give Albertans information and help to quit using tobacco products through the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy.
- Develop a Traffic Safety Strategy that focuses on occupant restraint, impaired driving, aging drivers, high-risk drivers, and speed and intersection safety.
- Encourage workplace safety through implementation of Workplace Safety 2.0, a joint industry-government strategy to reduce workplace injuries by 40% between 2000 and 2004, and by updating requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* regulations.
- Provide vaccines, administrative funding and support to regional health authorities and develop guidelines and goals for immunization programs.
- Implement province-wide suicide prevention strategies and implement the Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Framework.
- Implement the Alberta Breast Cancer Screening and the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Programs.
- Support healthy births and optimal child development through early childhood initiatives.

Supporting Healthy Choices

- The Premier's Advisory Council on Health also called for consideration of non-financial incentives to help people make healthy choices.
- Incentives can be used to:
    - **Strengthen our motivation** to make healthier choices (e.g., awareness and information campaigns like Healthy U)
    - **Address the difficulties we face** in making healthy choices (e.g., community organizations provide sports equipment for children whose families cannot afford it; exercise programs at work)
    - **Make it easier for us** to make healthy choices (e.g., walking and cycling trails, smoke-free policies)
    - **Make it harder for us to make unhealthy choices** (e.g. limit where we can buy tobacco; stock school vending machines with healthy food choices)
- There are already many incentives in place in our schools, workplaces and communities. We need to build on these, to give every Albertan the knowledge, skills and opportunities to make healthy choices.
- Creating change will take time, and will involve communities, employers, health organizations, schools and government at all levels.
- The Government of Alberta can support their efforts by:
    - Helping other organizations understand what prevents healthy choices and behaviour change.
    - Providing examples to show how incentives can enhance work already underway to improve health in our schools, workplaces and communities.
    - Encouraging researchers to test new ideas and share the results.
    - Continuing to review new initiatives to encourage safe and healthy workplaces and provide information and resources for employees to remain healthy.
    - Formally recognizing organizations that make an extra effort to improve people's health.

PARTNERSHIPS: The Framework is an important component of the Alberta Government's Health Sustainability Initiative and was prepared considering the other cross-ministry initiatives.

The Framework has been developed by the following government departments: Alberta Health and Wellness; Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Alberta Children's Services; Alberta Community Development; Alberta Human Resources and Employment; Alberta Learning; Alberta Municipal Affairs; Alberta Seniors as well as the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission; the Alberta Cancer Board; and the Alberta Mental Health Board.

All government departments, along with the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, the Alberta Mental Health Board, the Alberta Cancer Board, health regions, local governments and community organizations will work together to help reach the health targets.

Framework for a Healthy Alberta

Alberta
HEALTH AND WELLNESS

How healthy are we?

Overall, Albertans enjoy long and healthy lives. We want to live as long as possible in good health and prevent deaths and injuries from causes we can do something about.

Chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, cancer and chronic obstructive lung disease, are the leading causes of death in Alberta, and the greatest drain on our health care resources. The most common chronic diseases are linked by a few risk factors—unhealthy diets, lack of exercise, tobacco use and substance abuse as well as other risk-taking behaviours. These risk factors reflect choices we make in our daily lives. If we make healthier choices, we can move closer to the vision of healthy Albertans in a healthy Alberta.

Albertans are living longer, and the population, as a whole, is aging. This affects us as individuals, our families, communities, health and education systems and all levels of government. It presents challenges and opportunities in addressing chronic diseases and in creating a healthy Alberta.

The Premier's Advisory Council on Health made its first recommendation "to stay healthy." It called on the Government of Alberta to set clear objectives and targets for health for the next ten years, focusing on reducing risk factors, and to track progress towards those targets.

In response, this *Framework for A Healthy Alberta* sets objectives and targets to guide the Government of Alberta's action in promoting health and preventing disease and injury. As well, regional health authorities and community organizations can use the Framework to guide their policies, programs and services.

It is not always easy to make the right choices. Therefore, in addition to developing the Framework, the Government of Alberta looked at what causes us to behave as we do and explored how incentives can support and encourage us to make healthier choices.

The Framework builds on a foundation of initiatives developed by the Government of Alberta that address health determinants—things that affect our health. These initiatives include the Alberta Child and Youth Initiative, the Low Income Review, the Youth Employment Strategy, the Parent Child Literacy Project, the Aboriginal Policy Framework, the Alberta Diabetes Strategy and the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy.

By implementing the Framework, it is hoped that by 2012, more of us will have taken steps to be healthy—become more active, stopped smoking and made sure our children are immunized against vaccine preventable diseases. A generation into the future, we should be less likely to develop heart disease, cancer, lung disease, diabetes and other serious illnesses, and have fewer injuries.

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Designing an Effective Framework

Our health is greatly affected by such things as gender, age, genetics, personal health practices and coping skills, social support, living and working conditions, the physical environment and early childhood experiences. These key influences are called the "determinants of health." Some of these are within our control; others are not.

Any approach to improving health must consider these determinants, and involve more than the health care system. Albertans, a variety of government departments, health and community organizations, schools and employers need to work together. The following diagram provides an overview of the *Framework for a Healthy Alberta*.

Vision:
Healthy Albertans
in a
Healthy Alberta

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Outcome: Reduce Chronic Diseases

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Outcome: Improve Healthy Behaviours

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Strategies to:

- Support healthy public policy
- Create supportive environments
- Strengthen community action
- Develop personal skills
- Reorient health services

Where: homes, schools, workplaces, communities

Who: children, youth, adults, seniors

Health determinants - things that affect our health:

- gender and age
- genetics
- income and social status
- social support
- education
- employment and working conditions
- physical environment
- early childhood experiences
- health services
- personal health practices and coping skills
- culture

The Framework focuses on two broad health outcomes. The first outcome is to improve healthy behaviours. Reaching the targets for 2012 will show that more Albertans are making healthier choices.

The second outcome is to reduce the incidence of chronic disease among Albertans. This outcome may require 20 years or more to reach, depending on how well we do on the first outcome. Meeting the 2012 targets is only the first step.

The Framework represents the work of several government departments. Together, they have identified objectives, targets and strategies to reach the health outcomes. These strategies will complement the many excellent programs already in place in our schools, the health care system and our communities to help us live healthier lives. Some population groups, such as Aboriginal people and low-income Albertans, are at greater risk of poor health. Therefore, specifically directed programs within the broader population health and communication strategies should be considered to ensure that they can attain the health results enjoyed by all Albertans.

In addition, the government is committed to primary health care reform. Primary health care focuses on wellness, including giving Albertans the knowledge and skills to make healthy choices and stay as healthy as possible. Primary health care reform will promote better access to health-related services—improving our opportunities to get the information and support we need.

The Framework

Outcome 1: Improve healthy behaviours

Objective 1.1: More Albertans are physically active

Target to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Increase the proportion of Albertans who are physically active, from 52% to 62%	Continue encouraging recreation, sport and active living through the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation. Support active living education in schools through Health and Life Skills and Physical Education programs and by continuing the Ever Active Schools Initiative. Give Albertans information on active living through the Alberta Diabetes Strategy. Provide active living information through the provincial Healthy U information and education campaign.

Objective 1.2: More Albertans eat healthy foods

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Increase the proportion of Albertans who eat at least 5 to 10 servings of fruits and vegetables each day, from 34% to 50% Increase the proportion of Albertans with a healthy weight (Body Mass Index), from 47% to 55% (Measures for younger children to be developed)	Implement an education campaign on healthy eating and active living for older Albertans. Develop and implement a campaign, such as "Simply Healthy", focusing on healthy food choices and understanding labels. Provide healthy eating information through the provincial Healthy U information and education campaign. Give Albertans information on healthy eating through the Alberta Diabetes Strategy. Increase access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food, especially in remote communities and for low-income families. Provide education in schools through Health and Life Skills and Physical Education programs.

Objective 1.3: More Albertans are tobacco free

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Reduce the proportion of Albertans who smoke, from 28% to 18%	Continue to implement the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy, including giving Albertans information and help to quit using tobacco products.
Reduce the proportion of pregnant women who smoke, from 25% to 12%	Implement the Aboriginal Tobacco Use Strategy.

Objective 1.4: More Albertans are not abusing alcohol and illegal drugs

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Reduce the proportion of Albertans who regularly drink heavily, from 22.5% to 20%	Support preventive education in schools through the Health and Life Skills program.
Reduce the proportion of women who drink during pregnancy, from 4% to 0%	Provide information, prevention and treatment services, in partnership with community organizations, to reduce the misuse of alcohol and the use of illicit drugs.
	Continue to implement initiatives to prevent Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder.
	Develop measures, indicators and targets related to illicit drug use among adult Albertans.

Objective 1.5: More Albertans take steps to prevent injury

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Increase the proportion of Albertans who use seatbelts, from 69.2% in rural areas and 89.3% in urban areas to 95% throughout the province	Support injury control initiatives and research through the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research.
Increase the proportion of children who travel in properly used, approved child safety seats, from 70% to 95%	Develop an Alberta Injury Control Strategy.
Reduce mortality rate due to motor vehicle collisions, from 10.7 to 5 per 100,000 people	Ensure driver-licensing standards are adequate, comprehensive and harmonized with other provinces and territories, including a Graduated License Program for new drivers.
Reduce the mortality rate due to suicide, from 15.2 to 12.3 per 100,000 people	Develop a Traffic Safety Strategy that focuses on occupant restraint, impaired driving, aging drivers, high-risk drivers, and speed and intersection safety.
Reduce the rate of people hospitalized due to falls, from 366.8 to 300 per 100,000 people	Develop continuous safety awareness and education campaigns on child traffic safety (e.g. pedestrian, bicycle and school bus safety and child safety seats), seat belt use and snowmobile, all-terrain vehicle and motorcycle safety.
Reduce lost time claims, from 3.4 to 2.0 per 100 person-years worked	Implement the Aboriginal Youth Suicide Prevention Framework.
	Implement province-wide suicide prevention strategies focused on early identification, increased awareness, understanding stress and crisis management.
	Increase awareness and prevention of childhood falls.
	Continue to support strategies to reduce falls and fall-related injuries in older adults.
	Implement Workplace Safety 2.0, a joint industry-government strategy on workplace safety, to reduce workplace injuries by 40% between 2000 and 2004.
	Update requirements and encourage work site safety through changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act regulations.
	Target poor health and safety performers for inspection and investigate incidents and complaints.

Objective 1.6: More Albertans enjoy good mental health

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Reduce the proportion of Albertans at risk of depression, from 9.2% to 6%	Continue implementing public awareness initiatives on stress, effective coping skills and how to access support services.
Reduce the proportion of Albertans reporting "quite a lot" of life stress, from 26% to 20%	Increase employment, housing and social opportunities for people with mental illness.
	Coordinate and enhance mental health promotion initiatives.
	Develop and enhance student's problem-solving skills through Health and Life Skills, Career and Life Management and Physical Education programs.
	Enhance parenting skills by continuing to implement and strengthen positive parenting programs.
	Extend health benefits (coverage for dental care, eyeglasses, prescription drugs and emergency ambulance trips) to low-income families.

Objective 1.7: More Albertans are immunized against vaccine preventable diseases

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Eliminate measles by 2005	Provide vaccines, administrative funding and support to regional health authorities.
Reduce the rate of children under age 2 diagnosed with invasive pneumoccocal disease, from 8.8 per 100,000 in 2001 to less than 2.9 per 100,000 in 2005	Develop guidelines and goals for immunization programs.
	Develop and implement strategies to improve immunization rates, such as pamphlets and website information for parents.
Reduce the rate of children under age 2 diagnosed with invasive meningococcal disease, from 9.3 per 100,000 in 2001 to less than 2.9 per 100,000 in 2005	Improve collaboration among regional health authorities to control outbreaks of disease.
Experience no increase in the number of children under age 5 diagnosed with Haemophilus Influenza type b (Hib)	
Increase the proportion of Alberta seniors who get a flu vaccine, from 67.6% to 75%	

Outcome 2: Reduce chronic disease

Objective 2.1: Reduce heart disease

Target to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Decrease the mortality rate from heart disease, from 175 to 140 per 100,000 people	Promote healthy eating, healthy weight, physical activity and tobacco reduction. Promote early childhood development initiatives that support healthy births and optimal child development.

Objective 2.2: Reduce cancer

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Increase the proportion of women aged 50 to 69 who are screened for breast cancer, from 71% to 80% Reduce the mortality rate for breast cancer, from 24.2 to 22 per 100,000 women Reduce the rate of people who get lung cancer, from 56 to 48 per 100,000 people Increase the proportion of women aged 18 to 69 who are screened for cervical cancer, from 75.1% to 95% Reduce the mortality rate for cervical cancer, from 2.9 to 1.5 per 100,000 women Reduce the mortality rate from prostate cancer (currently 24.4 per 100,000 men)	Promote healthy eating, healthy weight, physical activity and tobacco reduction. Implement the Alberta Breast Cancer Screening Program. Implement the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy. Implement the Aboriginal Tobacco Use Strategy. Implement the Alberta Cervical Cancer Screening Program. Encourage physicians and men to promote prostate cancer examinations at annual check ups.

Objective 2.3: Reduce chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Target to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Reduce the mortality rate for COPD, from 29.6 to 20 per 100,000 people	Implement the Alberta Tobacco Reduction Strategy.

Objective 2.4: Reduce type 2 diabetes

Targets to 2012:	Government Strategies:
Reduce the rate of new cases of type 2 diabetes, from 4.5 to 4.1 per 1000 people at risk in the general population	Promote healthy eating, healthy weight and physical activity. Implement the Alberta Diabetes Strategy that includes strategies specific to Aboriginal people.
Reduce the rate of new cases of type 2 diabetes, from 9.0 to 8.5 per 1000 people at risk within the First Nations population	Promote early childhood development initiatives that support healthy births and optimal child development.

PARTNERSHIPS

The Framework is an important component of the Alberta government's Health Sustainability Initiative and was prepared considering the other cross-ministry initiatives.

The Framework has been developed by the following government departments: Alberta Health and Wellness; Alberta Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development; Alberta Children's Services; Alberta Community Development; Alberta Human Resources and Employment; Alberta Learning; Alberta Municipal Affairs; Alberta Seniors as well as the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission; the Alberta Cancer Board; and the Alberta Mental Health Board.

All government departments, along with the Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission, the Alberta Mental Health Board, the Alberta Cancer Board, health regions, local governments and community organizations will work together to help reach the health targets.

Supporting Healthy Choices

What can be done to help us make healthier choices and reach the targets?

Most of us know what behaviours are healthy—eating well, being active, not smoking, and so on. But making healthy choices is not always easy. We may not be sure what to do or how to get started. We may lack confidence, or approval from our families, friends or community to take the first step or keep going. We may not have the time or money to, for example, exercise, play sports or buy and prepare healthy foods. We may not have the support or opportunity to make healthy choices at work, at school or in our neighbourhoods.

Sometimes, we may not realize how our lifestyle affects our health.

That is where incentives can help.

Incentives are more than rewards or recognition for doing the right thing. Incentives are also things that encourage us to make healthy choices or support our efforts to be healthy.

Incentives can be used to change behaviour in four ways. They can:

- **Strengthen our motivation** to make healthier choices (e.g., campaigns like Healthy U can make us more aware of the need to make better choices and provide information and tips on what to do).
- **Address the difficulties we face** in making healthy choices (e.g., community organizations provide sports equipment for children whose families cannot afford it; make available nutrition classes on work time or exercise programs at work).
- **Make it easier for us** to make healthy choices (e.g., parks with safe playground equipment; walking and cycling trails; smoke-free policies; more opportunities to make healthy choices at school, such as Ever Active Schools).
- **Make it harder for us to make unhealthy choices** (e.g., limit where we can buy tobacco; stock school vending machines with healthy food choices, including fruit and vegetable juices instead of pop; limit advertising that encourages dangerous living).

Some of these are already in place in our schools, workplaces and communities.

We need to build on that, to give every Albertan the knowledge, skills and opportunities to make healthy choices. Creating change will take time, and will involve communities, employers, health organizations and schools.

Greater, longer lasting change occurs when we are motivated, have fewer barriers to making healthy choices, enjoy supportive environments, and are less encouraged to make unhealthy choices. For example, we are more likely to quit smoking when we can afford assistance to quit, our friends and family support our efforts, there are limits on where we can smoke, and tobacco costs more and is not readily available.

What can the Government of Alberta do to help? It can:

- Help other organizations understand what prevents healthy choices, the steps we go through to change, and the information, skills and support we need along the way.
- Provide examples to show how incentives can enhance work already underway to improve health in our schools, workplaces and communities.
- Encourage researchers to test new ideas and share the results, so that we put our efforts into what works.
- As an employer, continue to review new initiatives to encourage a safe and healthy workplace and provide information and resources for employees to remain healthy.
- Formally recognize organizations in the public and private sectors that make an extra effort to improve people's health.

This Framework tells us where we want to be by 2012. The government strategies are one set of tools to help us get there. Incentives are another, to provide support and encouragement where we live, learn, work and play.

Looking Ahead

This Framework contains targets that are realistic, achievable and yet challenging. They represent steps towards a goal, and are based on the best information available right now.

Some targets may be reached before 2012, or new information may lead to revised targets and additional strategies. The Government of Alberta and its partners will adjust the Framework and make sure it continues to guide them in improving the health of Albertans. From time to time, the government will report on action taken and results achieved.

The Framework provides direction towards the vision of better health for all of us. Working together, we can make that vision a reality.

Alberta Health and Wellness
10025 - Jasper Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2N3

Phone: (780) 427-7164
Fax: (780) 427-1171
Website: www.health.gov.ab.ca